

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 214424 TOSEC 240004

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ARDA:LAB

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 214424 TOSEC 240004

NODIS

WHITE HOUSE PLEASE PASS SECRETARY AT CAMP DAVID

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, LE

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: HOUGHTON/MACK VISIT TO

LEBANON (S/S NO.7618293)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM DAY

1. THE PROBLEM.

HOUGHTON AND MACK ARE STANDING BY IN NICOSIA, AND WE NEED
TO SEND THEM INSTRUCTIONS FOR THEIR SECOND VISIT TO THE
CHRISTIAN AREA OF LEBANON.

2. DISCUSSION.

YO REVIEWED BRIEFLY THE DRAFT WE HAD PREPARED OF
INSTRUCTIONS TO HOUGHTON AND MACK AND SUGGESTED CERTAIN
MODIFICATIONS (THAT DRAFT, TOGETHER WITH A COVERING MEMO
SUMMARIZING HOUGHTON'S REPORTS AND ANALYZING WHAT OUR
APPROACH SHOULD BE TO THE LEBANESE SYTUATION IN CURRENT
CIRCUMSTANCES IS IN YOUR MIDDLE EAST FILE). THE FOLLOWING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 214424 TOSEC 240004

DRAFT TELEGRAM FOR YOUR APPROVAL REFLECTS THE CHANGES YOU

WANTED MADE.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF TELEGRAM:

ACTION: NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

INFO: BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

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FOR HOUGHTON AND MACK ONLY FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, LE

SUBJECT: SECOND PHASE OF TALKS WITH CHRISTIANS

(A) YOU SHOULD RETURN TO JOUNIEH PROMPTLY AND TALK WITH THE SAME LEADERS AS WELL AS WITH A BROADER SPECTRUM OF SECOND ECHELON PEOPLE. IN TERMS OF MOVING THE CHRISTIANS IN A CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTION, GEMAYEL AND SARKIS SHOULD BE A PARTICULAR FOCUS OF OUR ATTENTION. REMAIN UP TO A WEEK IF YOU THINK IT USEFUL, THEN RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

(B) TELL THE LEADERS THAT YOU HAVE REPORTED YOUR EARLIER DISCUSSIONS TO WASHINGTON AND HAVE RECEIVED IN RESPONSE A NUMBER OF POINTS YOU WANT TO MAKE. YOUR TALKING POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(C) TALKING POINTS:

-- YOU SHOULD REITERATE THE POINT THAT THE U.S. CONTINUES TO SUPPORT A SOLUTION THAT WILL PRESERVE THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF LEBANON, AND ITS NATIONAL UNITY AND COHESION. WE DO NOT ACCEPT THE ARGUMENT, MADE BY SOME AMONG THE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP, THAT THE U.S. HAS BEEN DISINTERESTED IN LEBANON AND IN THE WELFARE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. THE WEAKNESS OF THE CHRISTIANS IN THE EARLY SPRING WAS A SOURCE OF GREAT CONCERN TO US. WE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 214424 TOSEC 240004

HAVE BEEN GRATIFIED TO SEE THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CHRISTIAN SIDE OVER THE SUCCEEDING PERIOD, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH, WHILE NOT DIRECTLY BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE U.S., WAS ONE THAT WE TOOK SATISFACTION IN AND WHICH WE FELT REFLECTED OUR INTEREST IN THE WELL-BEING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. (YOU WILL WANT TO HANDLE THIS CAREFULLY AND ONLY WITH THE PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP, BUT WE DO WANT TO GET ACROSS THE POINT THAT WE WERE NOT STANDING BY INDIFFERENTLY

DURING THE PERIOD OF CHRISTIAN DIFFICULTIES.)

-- THE CHRISTIANS NOW HAVING ACHIEVED A POSITION OF SOME SECURITY AND STRENGTH VIS-A-VIA THEIR OPPONENTS, THE TIME HAS COME, IN OUR VIEW, WHEN THERE SHOULD BE A SEARCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR SETTLEMENT.

-- THE PALESTINIANS CANNOT BE DECISIVELY DEFEATED MILITARILY, AND TO ATTEMPT IT WOULD MEAN ENDLESS WARFARE.

-- THERE IS GROWING CRITICISM IN THE ARAB WORLD OF THE PALESTINIAN ROLE IN THE LEBANESE CIVIL CONFLICT AND THE LEBANESE MOSLEMS APPEAR TO BE INCREASINGLY DISINCLINED TO CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE. THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THAT AT LEAST SOME AMONG THE PALESTINIAN LEADERS ARE PREPARED FOR MAJOR COMPROMISE. THE CHRISTIANS, MOREOVER, HAVE ACHIEVED IMPORTANT PSYCHOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE THROUGH THEIR RECENT VICTORIES OVER THE PALESTINIANS.

-- THIS ADVANTAGEOUS SITUATION MAY WELL NOT LAST. IN SUCH A CONFLICT, A CONSTANT FLUX AND SHIFTING OF THE BALANCE MUST BE EXPECTED. THE PALESTINIANS ARE BEING RESUPPLIED. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD OR IN SYRIA COULD TURN THE COURSE OF EVENTS AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS JUST AS THEY TURNED IN THE CHRISTIANS' FAVOR SOME MONTHS AGO.

-- WITH RESPECT TO THE SOVIET ROLE (ABOUT WHICH SARKIS INQUIRED), WE BELIEVE MOSCOW FACES A DILEMMA IN LEBANON. IT WANTS TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE LEFT AND THE PLO, BUT IT ALSO HAS A RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA. THE SOVIETS HAVE IN RECENT WEEKS ATTEMPTED TO PRESS THE SYRIANS TO WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON, BUT AS FAR AS WE KNOW THEY HAVE TAKEN NO
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 214424 TOSEC 240004

ACTION BEYOND THAT WITH DAMASCUS. THEY PROVIDE ARMS TO THE PALESTINIANS AND THE LEFT, BUT ONLY INDIRECTLY THROUGH OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. WE ARE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO THE SOVIET ROLE IN LEBANON, BUT WE MUST IN ALL FRANKNESS SAY THAT IF THEY PROLONG INDEFINITELY THEIR PRESSURE ON SYRIA AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIANS, THIS COULD HAVE ITS AFFECT ON THE SITUATION.

-- WE ARE PREPARED TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY PRINCIPLES AND WITH A RESTRICTED ROLE FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON ALONG THE LINES OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED SYRIAN EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND WE WOULD BE WILLING TO USE OUR INFLUENCE WITH KEY GOVERNMENTS AT THIS POINT TO BACK

MOVES IN LEBANON TO BRING THE FIGHTING TO AN END AND
NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT.

-- SARKIS IS DUE TO BE INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT ON
SEPTEMBER 23. WE THINK IT IMPORTANT THAT THIS
CONSTITUTIONAL STEP TAKE PLACE AS SCHEDULED. THE
INTERVENING WEEKS UNTIL THEN WILL OBVIOUSLY BE KEY ONES,
SINCE WE ASSUME EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO INSTALL
SARKIS UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH WILL PERMIT HIM TO MOVE
PROMPTLY AHEAD WITH THE JOB OF RECONCILIATION AND RE-
CONSTRUCTION.

-- WE WILL BE PREPARED, MOREOVER, AFTER A LEBANESE
SOLUTION IS REACHED, TO HELP SARKIS AND HIS GOVERNMENT
REBUILD LEBANESE INSTITUTIONS AND THE LEBANESE ECONOMY.
HOW IT WOULD BE BEST TO DO THIS WE WOULD EXPECT TO
CONSIDER TOGETHER WITH SARKIS AT THAT TIME.

-- THE U.S. WILL ALSO BE PREPARED TO PLAY ITS PART IN
EQUIPPING A LEBANESE NATIONAL FORCE AFTER THE CONFLICT
IS CONCLUDED. MEANWHILE, WE WILL CONTINUE OUR POLICY OF
NOT SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO EITHER SIDE, NOR PERMITTING
COMMERCIAL SALES. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT WE ARE
INDIFFERENT TO CHRISTIAN NEEDS, BUT ONLY TO SAY THAT IN
THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF TODAY, IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO EXPECT
US TO PROVIDE WEAPONS TO ANY FACTION IN THIS CIVIL
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 214424 TOSEC 240004

CONFLICT.

-- WE CANNOT ESTABLISH A CONTINUOUS DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE
IN JOUNIEH OR EAST BEIRUT WITHOUT GIVING UNACCEPTABLE
APPEARANCE OF SUPPORT FOR PARTITION. WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN
ACCUSED OF THIS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS CURRENT MISSION.
WE DO HOPE TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO TALK WITH YOU AND
OF COURSE WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE CONDITIONS RESTORED IN
WHICH OUR BEIRUT EMBASSY OFFICIALS CAN REESTABLISH
NORMAL CONTACTS.

-- (FOR THOSE WHO HAVE INQUIRED) WITH RESPECT TO OUR
RECEPTION IN WASHINGTON OF VISITING CHRISTIAN LEADERS,
WE DO NOT WANT TO REPLY IN THE ABSTRACT TO POSSIBLE
FUTURE VISIT PROPOSALS. WE WOULD CERTAINLY TRY TO BE
HOSPITABLE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, AN ENVOY FROM SARKIS, ONCE
HE IS INSTALLED AS PRESIDENT, WILL BE APPROPRIATELY AND
WARMLY RECEIVED.

4. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT YOU APPROVE THE ABOVE TELEGRAM.

5. DRAFTED: NEA:AR DAY; APPROVED: THE SECRETARY;
CLEARANCE: ; S:HCOLLUMS
EAGLEBURGER

SECRET

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